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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Conditions in Gnojna Village: Resettlement/Organization
of Commune/Religion/Propaganda/Farming/Education/
ZMP/Sunday Visiting

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1. "The village of Gnojna /sig/ in the Strzelin district has a population composed almost entirely of settlers transferred there from the eastern Polish Territories incorporated into the USSR after World War II. There are few Silesians and not a single German. One group of repatriates came from Chlopy, commune of Komarno. [redacted]

Resettlement

2. "The soil at Gnojna is quite fertile, suitable for the cultivation of wheat and beetroots. The new settlers, on arrival in summer 1946, found the homes untouched by the war. They have maintained them in good repair. The other buildings belonging to the farms were in bad condition; some had collapsed, some had been burned down.
3. "The settlers in Recovered Territories have received the titles of property for their new farms. But these titles are limited because they cannot dispose of them. They cannot even give up their farms without official permission. For agricultural machines, tools and livestock, the farmers pay small rates to an Agricultural Office. Although they have had to surrender their machines to the

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machine center of the Samopomoc Chlopska cooperative, they still have to pay the rates due.

4. "The village of Gnojna is the seat of the commune which comprises the villages: Gnojna, Zielonkowice, Karnkow, Roznow (local railway station), Kowalow and Jeszkotle. In Jeszkotle a PGOR (state-owned estate) is in operation. The commune belongs to the district of Strzelin. Due to the village's distance from that district town (over 20 km), it has more links with Grotkow, which is only seven km away.
5. "Before World War II the road from Gnojna to Grotkow and Strzelin had a good asphalt-mixture surface. Since the war nothing has been done to maintain it in a good condition. In the main street of the village the surface is practically ruined. The road is covered with deep mud, but underneath the strong cement foundation still holds. The people in the commune, especially the young people, want to repair this road but have been given no help from the authorities and no materials.
6. "Other facilities in the village have been ruined through neglect, although the local people want to restore them.
 - (a) One is the water 'installation'. When the new settlers arrived they found this installation out of order. They wanted to have it repaired but did not receive the necessary allocation of pipes and other spare parts. The water has stopped running and the installation is slowly deteriorating. The village youths have been anxious to restore a swimming pool which exists in the village from before World War II, but with the water installation out of order the pool is also deteriorating.
 - (b) In 1946, the settlers found the local brick kiln quite undamaged and partially functioning. The commune wished to run the kiln to help in the local restoration. But in 1949 the authorities removed the machinery and closed the kiln. The village soil has good layers of clay for bricks. Since the kiln was closed, the exploitation of the clay has ceased. When all private enterprises were nationalized, the village bakery was closed. The village no longer produces its own bread. The bread comes, if it comes, from a State bakery in Grotkow. My family coped with this difficulty by getting some heat-resistant bricks and building a bake oven in their own farmhouse. The Communists, however, consider home bread-baking a step backward in the organization of communal life.
7. "The village of Gnojna receives electricity from the power stations at Jelenia Gora or Walbrzych. From time to time the current breaks down.
8. "The cooperative Samopomoc Chlopska has formed a machine center for the commune. Most of the machines are former German property. The rental of a threshing machine is 30 zlotys per hour. The old equipment has really required replacements for years but is still in use. Nowadays the farmers take the machines from the center reluctantly because: they break down continually and the last user is always responsible for repairs. In April 1953 in Gnojna there was some talk that the machine center would receive new tractors of Czechoslovak production.
9. the responsibility for the deterioration of buildings, technical equipment and installations in Gnojna rests with the regime. If the authorities had given even the smallest help to the settlers - allocating them some bricks, timber, pipes, asphalt - the local people would have restored everything to good working condition by their own work. And if the village were not under so strong an economic pressure many things could be at least repaired. But the authorities squeeze out everything they can from the farmers. The aim, it is claimed, is the development of industry; but no one in Poland understands the logic of all this. Certainly the young people in Gnojna do not understand it. Even at ZMP meetings in Gnojna there have been several occasions where boys have asked their instructors why the standard of life in the USSR is still so low after nearly 40 years of revolution; surely, the time should have come for the development of light industry to meet the needs of everyday life of the citizens. The 'politruks' appear unprepared to

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answer such queries; they merely swear at such 'reactionary propaganda'. Another mistake committed by the authorities in the management of the Western Territories is pointed out often: the losses from neglect of technical equipment and installations. The question was often raised at the meetings of the local ZMP and Communal National Council. The reply was purely demagogic: as soon as the Six-Year Plan is achieved, People's Poland will recoup these losses. The third mistake is of political importance: since there has been little practical reconstruction in the Gnojna area, the population settled there feels unsure, as if only temporarily settled.

Organization of the Commune

10. "The Communal National Council at Gnojna consists of about 20 persons elected by the villages belonging to the commune. They meet usually twice a month and receive a small reimbursement of expenses. The chairman of the Council should be elected, according to the rules; but in practice the District authorities choose him. In the Gnojna commune the chairman is a man from the USSR: whether a Pole or a Russian I do not know. He is a Communist and speaks Polish with a Russian accent. He gets a salary of about 900 zlotys a month. The secretary of the Council gets about the same salary. Until 1 May 53, Emil Kuzma was secretary of the Council and also secretary of the local Party organization. He was dismissed from both jobs for giving his 1st of May speech while drunk.
11. "The office of the commune is divided into many sections (Service to Poland, youth problems, agricultural questions, roads, military matters, etc). The officials are not local people but sent from other places. They receive 500-600 zlotys a month on the average. There is a separate tax section employing two or three persons. There is also a special section for agricultural deliveries which represents the Central Purchasing Office (Centralny Urzad Skupu).
12. "The villages within the commune elect their bailiffs. Every village is divided into tens, each ten having its own 'tenner' who helps the bailiff. This system helps in calling general meetings and controlling the fulfillment of the plans for sowings, and harvests and deliveries.
13. "General meetings of the commune or of a village (Gromada) take place rarely - only when the authorities want something from the farmers. These meetings are not popular. At the beginning the farmers even tried to send their young sons in their place. But this was soon forbidden; the attendance of adult farmers became compulsory. As of June 1953, no suggestion to set up a farming cooperative had been raised. But the young people have been educated to consider the cooperative an advantageous solution for the village. Purely political meetings are rare. When they happen the peasants simply listen passively to whatever the activists say. Sometimes instructive talks are held about new methods of cultivation - always with reference to the achievements of the USSR. Finally, several times a year there are obligatory official celebrations. The communal secretary Jan Pierez is the chief activist for Gnojna.

Religion

14. "The church in Gnojna is always full at services. Practically all the local people attend. There is no open anti-religious campaign. There is, however, a constant effort to instill materialistic conceptions into the minds of the youth, by popularizing the theory of biological evolution, allegedly contrary to faith in God. The local priest is Reverend Jozef Basista, transferred from the Tarnopol district. He does not belong to the 'regime' priests and is respected for his courageous sermons against materialistic doctrine. The village organization (PKP) has opposed his influence.

Propaganda

15. "Twice a month a cinema unit arrives from Strzelin and arranges shows of propaganda films. Generally no one believes the propaganda. If some request

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or information comes from the authorities, the people instinctively oppose it, although outwardly they listen and pretend that every word is sacred. This was the reaction to the official explanations about the war in Korea, bacteriological warfare, and the Colorado beetle.

- 25X1 16. "Sometimes meetings are used to condemn a member of the community. [redacted]
25X1 [redacted] the ZMP organization in Reznov proclaimed Franciszek Rys 'the enemy of the people', because he was slack in fulfilling his duties as a ZMP member.

Shop

17. "The Samopomoc Chlopska cooperative runs a village shop in Gnojna. This shop is practically always empty; usually one can only get fertilizers, sold only to farmers who have fulfilled the plan. Sometimes there is a little paraffin or sugar or some 'unrationed' textile fabrics.

Farming

18. "General meetings of the population of commune or village are called to fix the quotas of compulsory deliveries for the coming harvest. These meetings are generally attended by officials from the District National Council. Early in 1951 officials arrived to force the village of Gnojna to cover 20% of deliveries, the amount not met in the people's plan. Meetings were held continuously for four days until the exhausted peasants gave way.
19. "The sowing plans are based on the delivery plans. The commune authorities receive these plans from the district authorities. These plans vary every year and specify the areas to be sown with corn of all kinds, oil-producing plants, flax, sugar beets, and potatoes. Then every farmer is told how much per hectare of each product he should deliver to the state, at a price which is about 40-50% lower than that on the free market in town. Each farm must also deliver certain amounts of meat, milk and eggs.

25X1 [redacted] in 1953 [redacted] who owns 10 hectares,
25X1 had to deliver four tons of corn, 200 kilograms of meat (live weight) and 700
25X1 eggs.

20. "The authorities encourage the farmers to accept 'voluntary obligations', which means that a farm undertakes to deliver additional quantities of certain products to the State, above the basic compulsory quota. The prices which the State pays for such voluntary deliveries are quite good and sometimes exceed those obtained on the free market. The snag is that, once a farmer has agreed to deliver such an additional quantity, the obligation is considered as binding as the basic quota, and he may be prosecuted for failing to fulfill it. Because of farming risks - poor harvests, cattle disease, frosts - many farmers resist voluntary obligations.
21. "A farmer who fails to deliver his quota is punished by the verdict of a commune court (Gminne Kolegium Sadowe). The punishments vary from a fine to prison sentence and confiscation of property. Also, whenever the actual deliveries fall below the quota, a search is made on the farm to find out if the farmer has hidden a part of his crops or cattle to deceive the authorities.
22. "Collection centers for compulsory deliveries are mostly situated in the communal territory. Sugar beets must be transported farther. At first the farmers had to take them straight to the nearest sugar plant, which is in Strzelin. During 1953 a collection center for sugar beets was established in Grotkow which lies much nearer. But because this shortened route benefited the farmers, the authorities deducted from the payment due for sugar beets certain small sums equivalent to what the farmers had allegedly 'saved' in costs of transport.
23. "Farmers who fulfill delivery quotas may buy fertilizers in the local shop, and also small amounts of certain scarce materials: nails, wood to repair farm buildings, etc. Another scarce material is coal, but this is rarely available in the village; many farmers travel a long way to get some. My father usually went as far as the Walbrzych district to buy coal.

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The price he paid in 1953 was 70 zlotys per hundredweight. Generally, life is much easier for a farmer who has delivered his full compulsory quota.

24. Another compulsory obligation is fire insurance. Every farm must pay fire insurance rates, but about this no one complains.
25. The great difficulty in farm work is that large numbers of village youths are usually taken away for two or three months during the harvest season.
26. One burden is the obligation to give 14 working days every year, without pay, for public purposes (Szarwark). This obligation binds every single farm. It existed also, in a certain form, before World War II, but at that time the work was done for the benefit of the commune or village, eg maintenance of communal roads and paths. Now the commune gains no benefit; the work is used for the purposes of the State. Thus, deputizing for my father, I worked several times without pay on the neighboring PGR in Jeszkotle. In this way my father's farm fulfilled its Szarwark obligation. Regular laborers in the Jeszkotle PGR are recruited among the local population. The boys and girls from the local Gruzba Police also are frequently directed to help in PGR harvest when they do their compulsory three days of work in a month. The results obtained at that PGR were unsatisfactory and ordinarily fell below the production plans. This meant that the plans of State deliveries fixed for the whole district remained unfulfilled. 'Fulfillment at any price' being the target of district authorities, the individual farmers usually suffer. The district officials set immediately to extract the lacking quotas from them in the form of additional deliveries. The Jeszkotle PGR farm buildings looked neglected and the cattle underfed. A large number of the fields were used for flax cultivation, but there was never enough labor to gather it. [redacted] in the collection of rye [redacted] rye was damp and had started germinating.

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Education

27. The village of Gnojna has a seven-grade coeducational primary school with three teachers. These teachers are pre-World War II teachers. In 1946 lessons were held according to pre-war methods and textbooks. But in 1949-50 a great change came. The school library was 'purged' of all 'reactionary' literature. Old manuals were withdrawn and new ones issued. [redacted] Polish history from a book which was a Polish translation of a Soviet work on the subject. [redacted] during a lesson in Russian language, stories about the life of Soviet youth were read. Some children who had been deported to the USSR during the war - and there are quite a number of them in Gnojna - began protesting that the life of Soviet youth was different; the real picture was tragic. The teacher answered only: 'This is what the manual says'. Although the teachers must abide by the authorities, they are respected.
28. Obligatory teaching of Russian has been introduced in the sixth grade.
29. The new school manuals sometimes cause sharp conflicts between children and their parents. The grown-ups who remember Polish history and literature from pre-war schools try to amend at home the wrong ideas which the children have formed at school from the 'official manuals'. Sometimes children carelessly mention this at school. In Gnojna no trouble has been caused, because the teachers are of the pre-war generation. But [redacted] in a neighboring village the ZMP and PKP (Podstawowa Komorka Partyjna) have intervened a number of times. The parents are asked to come to school and severely reprimanded. Such methods to frighten the parents from undermining Communist authority are common. Nevertheless, there is a distinct division at school between children of Party activists, or children who have formed Communist inclinations on their own - and children with anti-Communist attitude; the latter category remains in great majority.
30. Schoolchildren must belong to a number of organizations: the Society for Polish-Soviet Friendship, League of Friends of the Soldier, the Boy Scouts, etc. [redacted] the former importance of the Boy Scouts has completely

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disappeared. In old times, scouting gave boys a chance of interesting experience and adventure; [redacted]

[redacted] Such things are no longer tolerated. The Communists do not like to see young boys and girls gather in small groups, cultivate interests of their own, go for trips and walks; this might provide too convenient an opportunity for anti-regime conversations. Map reading, for instance, might instill thoughts of escape from Poland. Therefore all activities of children and youth are controlled. The Boy Scouts have become just another form of educational pressure on the young generation.

31. "The teachers in Gnojna are badly paid: they get around 550-600 zlotys per month. A teacher in charge of Russian lessons receives an additional allowance of 25 zlotys per month.

The ZMP

32. "The ZMP (Union of Polish Youth) plays a strong role in village life. The ZMP organization of the local commune has its central committee in Gnojna. In the commune office building the ZMP has its club; there also the wall newspaper is edited and a special notice board carries reprimands for those who have failed to demonstrate a sufficient 'political consciousness'. This club also has a good radio set. ZMP members in Gnojna use it occasionally to listen to Western broadcasts. This of course is done unofficially in small intimate groups. Foreign radio broadcasts are an antidote against the constant propaganda pressure of the regime which cannot help but influence the young people.
33. "The villages within the Gnojna commune have their own ZMP sections. The ZMP instructor for the commune is the same Jozef Szpak who is also instructor of Service to Poland. He organized lectures and meetings.

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35. "The activities of the ZMP in Gnojna consist of:

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- (a) Lectures about once a month given usually by Szpak or by someone from the communal or district ZMP authorities. [redacted] following subjects:

Polish-Soviet friendship;
Six-Year Plan in agriculture;
Anniversary of 23rd February;
Problems of modern Poland;
Private Ownership;
Youth Production Cooperatives;
Problem of Denunciation as class weapon.

- (b) Political-social indoctrination. Through the ZMP, political literature penetrated the village, including Communist youth newspapers and the Soviet Komsomolskaya Pravda and Pionierskaya Pravda.

- (c) Gala occasions and anniversaries.

- (d) Political agitation. In recent years the ZMP in Strzelin district received an order to liquidate 'blank spots' (Biale Plamy). This meant that in ZMP Gnojna a group of young people were selected to tour the places where no ZMP sections existed and persuade the youngsters to set up such sections. This agitation was mostly done by lectures on, eg the US imperialist threat, the need for peace, the importance of building up socialist Poland. But the liquidation of 'blank spots' progressed slowly; the youth generally are reluctant to join the ZMP. The ZMP supervises also the political standard of the school.

- (e) Instrument of the regime for exercising pressure on village population.

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In February or March 1951, for example, it was found that the crop plan had been fulfilled only 80%. To force the farmers to additional deliveries of corn, a special delegation was sent to Gnojna from the County National Council in Wroclaw. A delegate called [] the commune office as the youngest member of the ZMP - who should therefore display special eagerness - and tried to [] denounce [] father. The delegate wanted to know whether [] father had hoarded any corn. He used all possible persuasion; he promised [] a scholarship and assistance to any school [] at the expense of the State. During the next few days, other ZMP members had similar talks. Under the circumstances, the parents decided it was better to deliver the additional amounts of corn. In the course of time, the ZMP has worked out a more efficient technique. A number of small 'front teams' (Czolowki) are formed to see that the adults do their duty. Since the older generation is still full of 'reaction', the youth should help the State overcome their resistance.

36. "The ZMP in Gnojna has not carried on an open anti-Church campaign. It opposed indirectly, through lectures (eg on the theory of evolution) and through organizing meetings and jobs at the times of church services. The results were poor. When Bishop Franciszek Kominek from Opole inspected the diocese everybody in Gnojna, even Party authorities, turned up to welcome him. At Easter 1953 in Gnojna the political action of the ZMP against the Church appeared stronger than before. It was argued that Poland really needed a national church, or a church on the Protestant model.

Youthful Attitudes

37. "The youth in the Gnojna area have already become deeply attached to the Western Territories as 'their own land'. The older people say that they would like to return to Lvov or Wilno. The young people have already acquired patriotic feelings for the local landscape and familiar places.
38. "The hatred of the Germans is still strong, especially among the youth in the pro-regime group. The older generation, of course, remembers World War II. They still say in Poland that the Germans have not been punished enough for their crimes. On the other hand, the Communist propaganda about the armaments of Germany (Federal Republic) has had results. The Poles - especially the youth - again begin to regard the Germans as potential future enemies. The propaganda of Polish friendship with Germany (Soviet Zone) shows some progress.
39. "In a country where the school instills Communism and the power of the Church is limited, true Polish traditions are instilled in young people only within the homes.

Sunday in the Village

40. "In the village of Gnojna, Sundays still run in their old traditional way with some changes. In the morning nearly all the people go to church; many also go to the afternoon services. The church in Gnojna has two Masses and one afternoon service every Sunday. People go to church gladly because they like and respect their priest. When people leave the church, they stop a while to talk to their neighbors, usually on farming matters, and then they go home. The rest of the day is spent quietly.
41. "Dances, which in the old days were nearly always held in village inns every Sunday, are now arranged rarely. A mobile cinema unit arrives in the village about once a month, around the 15th, and always with propaganda films. People stay at home most of the day or perhaps go for a little walk.
42. "It is different when delegates from the District National Council arrive to hold a meeting on important agricultural matters. This is usually done on a Sunday, and all farmers must compulsorily attend. Fortunately this

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does not happen often. Meetings of the village youth organizations (ZMP and Service to Poland) are often organized on Sundays. But the village youth generally do not let themselves be intimidated from missing their church service."

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